



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WATER RIGHTS

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To the water users on Raft River, South Fork Junction Creek, and Basin Creek

The purpose of this letter is to summarize and provide a written record of the items that were discussed and the decisions that were made at the meeting of the above mentioned water users on April 30, 2001.

John Firth made a short presentation concerning his review of the water rights and the hydrographic survey maps for the lands irrigated above and below the reservoir and the lands irrigated on Hal Amidan's ranch. He limited his review to surface water rights that are used for irrigation.

The irrigation practices above the reservoir were discussed in conjunction with the operation of the reservoir company. The informal agreement within the company is that the shareholders above the reservoir will irrigate using as much of the direct stream flow as is available and the shareholders below the reservoir will irrigate using the water stored in the reservoir. During the early part of the season while the stream flow is relatively high, the shareholders above the reservoir divide the water among themselves according to the number of streams that are diverted by each shareholder. Later in the season, when the streamflow has dropped off, the shareholders divide the water by taking irrigation turns.

The shareholders above the reservoir dry dam the stream completely, however, because the irrigated parcels are fairly small and fairly close to the creek, it does not take long for the irrigation water to return to the creek. The irrigators make an effort to put as much water on their lands as possible during the early part of the season to build up the ground water level in the area. They believe this benefits the growth of their crops later and that this ground water storage seeps back into the stream and maintains higher stream flows during the later part of the irrigation season.

Ted Tracey's irrigation practices below the reservoir were discussed. It was determined that his surface water rights currently allow him to irrigate the lands located generally below the main pipeline from his upper diversion. His groundwater rights allow him to irrigate the lands located generally above the pipeline. Ted indicated that he probably would not use his well this year because of power costs. Ted also said that he is making changes in the way he irrigates his land. He is reducing the size of his current pivot and shifting it somewhat to the south. He is adding another smaller pivot on the north end of his property; it will be supplied by a pipeline that he is installing from his lower diversion. Ted said that during the irrigation season he does not shut the water off when he is cutting hay. He said that the reservoir remains open because he is always taking water either at his upper or his lower diversion. The reservoir was shut off last year for a short period so that some repair work could be done to a stream crossing.

Keith Nelson's irrigation operation was briefly discussed. He gets most of his irrigation water from

Basin Creek but at times he uses a little water from South Junction Creek.

The regulation of storage in the reservoir was discussed. It was agreed that a staff gage should be attached to the outlet tower of the reservoir in a position where it can be easily read. The staff gage will be used as an indicator of the reservoir level to ensure that water is not stored (the reservoir level does not increase) during the irrigation season (April 15 thru September 15). The reservoir level will be checked by the water users at their convenience. If any desire to make a record of their reservoir level measurements, it is suggested they include the gage height, the date, and the time of day that the reading was made. In addition, staff from the Logan Regional Office of the Division of Water Rights will make periodic visits to read and record the reservoir level indicated on the staff gage. It is anticipated the visits will be roughly on a monthly basis corresponding to other inspections in the area.

The reservoir company will construct the staff gage but will not be able to get it installed until this fall when the reservoir has been emptied. It was agreed that, for this season, the division staff will put a stake at the level of the reservoir surface in an inconspicuous place at the edge of the reservoir. The location of the stake and the reservoir level will be checked and re-staked at each succeeding visit to ensure that the reservoir level does not increase between visits.

It is hoped that this process will provide adequate regulation to ensure that water is being used properly according to water rights. It seems wise in this situation to approach the regulation of water distribution in phases. Once the staff gage has been installed, the division will monitor the distribution of water in the area for a couple of years. If it appears that the staff gage in the reservoir does not provide enough information for an adequate distribution or if there continue to be concerns, it may be necessary to require the installation of measuring devices above and below the reservoir. If measuring devices are installed and concerns or questions continue, it may then be necessary to appoint a water commissioner for the area.

Ordell Simper's reservoir was briefly discussed and the division agreed to send him an order to either close the diversion to the pond or breach the pond embankment. However, it was also indicated that if Mr. Simper were to make an application for a small regulating reservoir, the application might be approved.

It was agreed that another meeting of the water users should be held next March to review the water distribution for the 2001 season and to report on the installation of the staff gage in the reservoir. The Division of Water Rights will schedule the meeting and send out notices to the water users.

I hope this covers the issues and concerns that were discussed at the meeting. If there is any discussion that I have left out or if there are any concerns that were not brought up at the meeting, please contact me at (801)538-7380 or write to me at the address on the letter head so that they might be addressed.

Sincerely,



Lee H. Sim, P.E.

Assistant State Engineer for Distribution

cc: Bob Fotheringham, Regional Engineer
Ward Wagstaff, Assistant Attorney General